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JULY 1931

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The Phonograph Monthly Review

ROBERT DONALDSON DARRELL, *Editor* AXEL B. JOHNSON, *Associate Editor*

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ANNOUNCEMENT

REPERCUSSIONS from last month's editorial indicate a very strong wave of interest and support from our readers, hundreds of whom—both old and new—have written in to express their continued and energetic co-operation. These and other assurances of support convincingly demonstrate the validity of the belief to which we have always clung—that there is a very definite need for THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW. It is a pleasure to assure our friends in turn that the magazine will continue to serve them and that it is hoped with the improvement in general business conditions greatly to expand that field of service.

The magazine is very fortunate in again having the active participation of Mr. Axel B. Johnson, its founder, who after nearly a year of rest in Copenhagen has completely recovered from his severe illness and returned to this country to resume his indefatigable promotion of the magazine and of the entire phonographic movement in America. Mr. Johnson will represent the magazine in New York City and is sure to play a vital part in the more complete realization of its great potentialities as the journal of American phonography.

Effective with this issue we announce—in accordance with the trend of the times—a downward revision of our subscription rates. The yearly rate is now $3.00 in the United States; $4.00 elsewhere. Single copies are 25c each. Subscriptions now running will of course be extended proportionately, so that old as well as new subscribers will profit by the price reduction.

Making Records

By ROY GREGG

A description of disc manufacturing processes

A PHONOPHILE of many years' standing, it is with a goodly amount of shame that I have to admit never having seen phonograph records manufactured until this year of grace 1931. My confession is all the harder to make because of my being a native of Bridgeport, Connecticut, where Columbia records have been made as long as I can remember. Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Frank Dorian of the New York Columbia offices and Mr. James W. Murray, comptroller of the Bridgeport plant, I recently had a most illuminating trip through the rooms devoted to record making. A brief description of the processes involved should be of considerable value to record collectors who have not had the opportunity of observing at first hand the physical evolution of phonographic discs.

I was first taken to a miniature room which contained a very large kettle together with the necessary heating apparatus. In this kettle the ingredients (chiefly beeswax) are melted for the master waxes* used in the recording studios. In an adjoining room, only slightly larger than the melting room, the liquid wax is poured into the large moulds. After they have thoroughly cooled, the master waxes are taken from the moulds and stacked. These are much larger than the ten or twelve inch records to be made from them. The twelve inch master wax appears to be at least sixteen inches in diameter and fully an inch and a half in thickness. The master waxes are shipped to the New York laboratories where they are shaved before being utilized.

The master, when recorded, is returned to Bridgeport and plated in the usual manner which is familiar to phonophiles and need not be explained here in detail. The metal from the plating bath is deposited on the master surface, the thin metal sheet containing the impression being called the matrix. The finished matrices are then sent to the pressing room as needed.

The most interesting phase is the construction of the three layers of the Columbia laminated record. As is generally known, this record consists of three layers; the two playing surfaces consisting of only the finest and most essential ingredients. The middle section, or core, which must be strong and rigid—the backbone of the record so to speak—is of more inferior stock. The playing surfaces are separated from the core by the layers of paper. Let us follow the process of making the playing surfaces; more anon concerning the core.

I was ushered into a fourth room where there was a long and ponderous machine not unlike a newspaper printing press. At one end, on an elevation, stood some men who were "feeding" the machine with paper discs of moderate thickness. These discs passed through two rollers, the lower of which was literally swimming in a liquid of a thickness and color not unlike heated glue. One side of the paper disc was coated and placed automatically on a wide, slow moving belt. By the time the discs arrived at the end of this slow moving belt the coated surface was dry and they were ready to be stacked. These discs are sent to the pressing room.

The room where the grinding and mixing of the rough stock is done is naturally very dusty. The first thing that attracted my attention and wrung my heart was the gruesome spectacle of old records' destruction, literally by the thousands. Imagine the effect upon the writer, who values historical rarities above anything else in phonophilia! Visions of doomed De Reszkes, Scharwenkas, De Pachmanns, rare Nordicas were whirling though my head. The old stock in this morgue is broken up, ground and mixed with other raw materials and used for the hard core. These ingredients pass from the first floor, through grinding apparatus, mixers and rollers to the basement below where from a balcony one can see the product coming forth in huge sheets marked off in squares like chocolate fudge. These squares are broken off, stacked in boxes and sent to the pressing room.

The pressing machines are in a huge room, the place being filled with them almost as far as the eye can see. Two matrices are placed on the opposite "arms" of the pressing machine. The squares of hard stock are placed on a heated griddle to the presser's right. The presser places a label, then a

*Note: Until sound has been recorded on it, the blank is merely a "master wax." After recording, it becomes a "master record," while after the "master record" has been plated, the resulting metal disc is a 'master matrix." The "stamping matrix" (which is a negative derived from the "master matrix") is used for pressing records.

coated disc (coated side facing the matrix) on each matrix. A square of the hard stock (when it is sufficiently heated) goes between the paper discs and then the two matrices are pressed together under a pressure of 100 pounds. The surplus core oozes from the edges of the joined matrices. The experienced presser knows the exact time to leave the pressure on and then, after raising the upper "arm" and matrix, strips the record from the lower matrix placing it on a small pedestal at his left. It is a simple matter to strip the surplus that has oozed out at the edge of the record.

In a sixth room the records are placed on revolving wheels and the edges sandpapered smooth. After testing, the records are placed into envelopes and either packed for shipment or put into the stock room.

Besides the domestic and export Columbia records, many other brands are pressed in the Bridgeport factory. They include the Clarion, Harmony, Okeh (and American pressed Odeon), and Velvet Tone. In addition to the above, Columbia presses the records to accompany a series of text books published by Ginn & Company, several different series of language lessons sold by various publishers, and a large variety of talkie records (sixteen inches in diameter, playing fifteen minutes) for moving picture producers. All the latter classes of record manufacture are carried on under contract arrangements with the concerns who market the product.

An important feature of the Columbia business is the making of electrical transcriptions for radio broadcasting purposes. With this service broadcasting companies may record their complete programs, including announcements, for future use. This "spot disc broadcasting" offers many advantages. First, flexibility by giving a wider choice of territory, cities and stations and giving more latitude in selection of dates, not being confined to only one day, and allowing for keyed or progressive air programs, thus permitting territorial follow-ups by sales-managers and crews. The selection of an ideal hour of the day or night for program reception is a great advantage. On Coast to Coast broadcasts the difference in time is controlled, thus eliminating the greatest evil of chain broadcasting. The wasting of seven, eight, nine, or nine-thirty P.M. programs broadcast from New York when Pacific Coast business men and women are still in their offices or on their way home is eliminated. This works just the opposite when Hollywood broadcasts, for when the time is ideal for evening reception in the West, these same programs fall on deaf ears and closed sets in the East after midnight.

Again, recorded programs guarantee the artist's appearance on the date and hour announced and further insure the singer's being in good voice. When these broadcasts have been given, copies of the discs may be exported to other English speaking countries. Columbia offers a complete service for such work from the recording of the program to the furnishing of the finished disc in either twelve inch (78 or 33-1/3 r.p.m.) or sixteen inch (33-1/3 r.p.m.) sizes. I have treated this subject of electrical transcription at length because of the obvious advantages that it offers and because it will doubtless be of news value to the average reader.

Truly, my trip through the Columbia factory was a miniature education and I cannot understand why I neglected such a priceless experience for so long a time. It is impossible to set down in print all the many wonderful and intricate details of record manufacture, but I hope that this meagre attempt will give the phonophile an impression of the manner in which one brand of record makes its entry into the world.

PHONOGRAPHIC ECHOES

OFFICIALS of the RCA Corporation and its many subsidiaries — particularly the National Broadcasting Corporation — breathed more easily after the Federal Radio Commission decided by a three to two decision that the RCA had not forfeited its licenses by its violation of the Clayton Act. A number of independent companies opposed to the so-called "radio trust" had endeavored to bring about the forfeiture of the RCA's broadcasting licenses—thousands of them in all — following the court decision against the RCA group for attempting to monopolize the manufacture of radio apparatus (the Langmuir patents case.) By a narrow margin, however, the Commission decided that such monopoly did not entail an attempt to monopolize radio communication, the penalty for which is a mandatory revocation of broadcasting licenses. So many licenses and broadcasting stations were involved that the radio industry would have been violently disrupted if the Commission had revoked the licenses and the matter fought out at length in the courts.

EXHIBITS at the recent Radio Trade Show in Chicago demonstrate that last year's trend toward midget radio sets is gaining even greater ground. Such sets were offered by every manufacturer, including even those who in the past had clung almost exclusively to more expensive models. Sixteen out of thirty-four exhibitors showed no model costing over $100 at retail.

Conserving Musical Values

By JEAN-LOUIS

IT has been said and is often repeated that this is the "Age of Noise," in which we moderns live; and that determined attempts have been and are still being made to identify noise with music, is a truism. At one time this attempt looked to be on the road to success, but having advanced thus far it then began to go back and at present its cause is distinctly a lost one. The reaction was even swifter in coming than was anticipated. Marinetti is today a "back number" and the works of his epigones rise no higher than the category of the curious, whose interest is strictly transient; of which such a work as *Jonny Spielt Auf* is a "classical" example. This reaction has also stimulated the return to such masters as Bach, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, and others who are utterly and invariably musical in both thought and practice, and in the interpretation of those works purity of musical tone is paramount.

Nevertheless noise has invaded music and, popularly, if not critically speaking, has staked out a claim and settled on it—perhaps permanently. This is due to the fact that great masses of music lovers are today becoming familiarized with the musical masterpieces exclusively through the radio and have no means of knowing how far what they hear is from a natural audition, suffering from no intervening agencies. "Where ignorance is bliss," etc. Not knowing what they have lost they have no comprehension thereof and accept with joy and pleasure the substitute offered them, in the belief that it is the "real thing." I have as yet been unable to make up my mind whether this is, musically speaking, a blessing or a curse. It is unquestionably a blessing to many persons who are thus enabled to hear a wide range of compositions otherwise inaccessible; but at the same time it is effecting a vulgarization of great things that is to be deplored.

The phonograph has not escaped the ravages of noise as distinct from music. This has also infected those who make, as well as those who buy, the "finished product." It might not be so obtrusive if musicians, especially conductors, could learn the lesson that no interpretation ever comes off the discs "puribus et naturibus." Not one of them, despite in some cases extensive experience, seems to have learned to *conduct for the discs,* forgetful of the concert-hall. There is no other way of accounting for the shortcomings, which might with a little forethought be avoided—such as the exaggerated pianissimo and fortissimo effects which are so out of focus, theatrical, crude and ill-considered. These blemishes occur in some of the most celebrated recordings now so much bruited.

All our celebrated conductors go in too heavily for "interpretation" and this is more evident by far on the discs than in the concert hall. Between the listener and the music, as it comes from the disc, there are interposed no conductor himself, with prima-donna or hierophantic airs and graces; no spectacle of 100 or more executants and their instruments and efforts; no environment of elaborate architecture and assembled crowds of human beings. Hence what passes unnoticed in the concert hall becomes fatally apparent as released from the record. The mannerisms are doubly emphasized, the weaknesses doubly obtrusive. This is peculiarly evident as regards that sine-qua-non, tone. It is all too often sacrificed for "interpretation", oblivious of the fact that when one is sacrificed the other, willy nilly, goes along with it.

One of the abuses connected with this phase of recording has been the deliberate attempt to get into the record the concert-hall reverberation itself. The test of good acoustics in an auditorium is the absence of such reverberation and its presence in a record is an artistic blemish at any and all times. However, it still obtrudes, despite the many protests against it.

Modern recording of orchestral works also suffers, from my standpoint, from the preponderance of English orchestras that are used—for purposes of economy, it is to be supposed! At best the tone of the English orchestra is not comparable to that produced by the German orchestra or the best ones of America; something due to racial temperament, one may hazard. But it is notorious that British orchestras dispense with all but a minimum of rehearsals, and nothing is more fatal in a tonal ensemble. The Hallé band seems to be definitely superior to the other English orchestras whose

album sets are now so widely pressed, but if one listens to a set by one of the leading German or American orchestras for comparison, the vast inferiority of the English is at once apparent. This is admitted in England itself but I lately read an article by a well-known English critic in which, to counterbalance it, he made much of the fact that English orchestral players are the greatest sight-readers in the world; hence do not require extensive rehearsing. As if the most expert sight-reading possible could make up for the lack of actual practice!

The present Boston Symphony gets, to me, the best recording tone extant. It has for many years. As we all know, the old acoustical record of the finale to Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony, made by it under Muck, remains today a land-mark and one of the most glorious discs yet recorded. The New York Symphony, as recorded under Toscanini, attains great subtleties and poetic nuances of effect, but its tone, strictly as tone, is inferior to that elicited by Koussevitsky. The Philadelphia tone does not record nearly so well as it "listens" in the concert hall, but loses more, for some inexplicable reason, than any other. Few of its electrical records are as lovely, tonally, as were some of its old acoustic ones, and those possessing the latter would do well to hold fast to them. As the seasons have passed, Stokowski has striven more and more for brilliance and effectiveness, with a corresponding deterioration otherwise. The full-bloodedness of the New Yorkers under Mengelberg has never been surpassed in recorded music. Its monument is the acoustical "Les Préludes," which was a miracle in its way and is far superior to the electrical re-recording. The Chicago tone has fine body and resonance and in some of its recordings there is a perfection of attack that is unexcelled, reminding one of that of the Bostonians of the era of Muck, whose attack I have never heard equalled. I speak of all these orchestras as from direct hearing as well as from the discs.

One of the major problems of the record laboratories is the production—or, rather reproduction—of genuine piano tone. And not only tone, but overtone. That surpassing charm of piano music, the lingering reverberations which die, gradually away and prolong the spell upon the listener after the performer's hands have ceased to press the keys, remain still to capture. They have seemed, repeatedly, on the point of coming from the grooves: only, at the last, to stay pent within them. . . . Nevertheless there are some beautiful piano records now to be had, of which the finest, in tone, are "made in Germany."

It must be remarked of piano records, however, that a great, a very great deal depends upon the artist making them. While beyond criticism to the ear at a recital, the tone produced by a pianist may not record well. On the other hand, one less remarkable may record far better. The enormous use of the pedal and dependence upon it, rather than the key-board proper, by the modern pianist, undoubtedly interferes with good recording to a greater or less extent. "Pure" pianism will record better than that in which unremitting recourse to the pedal in order to get effects is the rule. It is the touch of the pianist that seems to succeed best, his pressure upon the keys themselves which is acoustically most amenable to reproduction. Those who caress the instrument get better results than those who trample upon it.

Amplification of tone as applied to musical sound gives precisely the same result as magnification of color or texture does visually. What to the human eye appears like a beautiful tone, in color, uniform in shade, when unduly magnified, disintegrates and assumes an altogether different aspect. A fabric that seems to the eye perfectly woven, reveals, beneath the lens, surprising roughness and inperfection in warp, woof and weaving. It is so with musical colors, shades and textures. Their amplification must be of the most discreet if we are to hear what the normal ear does when listening to the actual performance. Almost all the gains from the electrical side are supposed to be gains in "realism", but as a matter of fact art is above all an illusion and beyond a certain limit "realism" in recording is inartistic. It does not conserve purely musical values but distracts attention from them.

As I have been discussing "problems" in these paragraphs, it is not surprising that I have dwelt rather upon the shortcomings of present-day recording and reproduction, instead of their perfections. I wish again to affirm, however, in closing, that, as an "infant industry" the results already attained seem to me phenomenal and that, as time passes, their faults will be remedied and their excellence increased. Just at present we are in that familiar condition, the "transition phase." Only very recently have the Brahmins decided that the phonograph was not an "untouchable" and that it produces really music, in the high sense of the word. This capitulation will in the end lead to great things, for the cachet of expert critical recognition and approval is bound to be productive of progress and improvement.

Correspondence

Editor's Note: The editorial in the last issue brought forth a large number of letters, all revealing a very lively interest in the present state of the phonograph and recorded music, and a very genuine desire to improve that state. It is impossible to print more than a few examples of these letters, and it is perhaps unfortunate that the writers oftentimes reveal considerable prejudice. It should be distinctly understood that publication of these views does not mean that they are endorsed by the magazine. They are printed, however, because we believe that they are written in all sincerity and that they reveal a state of mind that prevails very largely today among record buyers. Expressions of other points of view will be welcomed.

Suggestions from Canada

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Undoubtedly there is something decidedly wrong in the gramophone business these days. How are we to account for the fact that in England H. M. V. and Columbia last year were able to declare a dividend of 20 per cent and 40 per cent respectively, and yet those self same companies in America today would have us believe that they cannot afford to advertise in their own and only magazine in America? To my mind, the psychology of the business is wrong. We have had two years now of bad business, and yet I am willing to bet that the phonograph industry has been relatively little hit. The introduction of the talkies must have opened up a vast field for profit, and there can be no doubt of their popularity with the public. For many concerns, over-advertising has been one of the causes of their present position. I do not think that anyone would claim that the gramophone companies have over-advertised. The trouble is, perhaps, that they see other people cutting their advertising along with other expenses, and they feel that they ought to do the same. So far as I can recall, I have never seen an advertisement, which met a wide public, drew attention to the issue of album sets and celebrity series. No wonder that the large majority of people do not know of their existence. In the companies' opinion these are for the select few and do not need advertising. What they do not realize is that by the judicious use of advertising, these "select few" could be increased to a considerable body. The great increase in the sale of good recorded music is not, as I see it, so much due to an uplifting of the musical taste (although that of course is a sizable factor) as to the increase of realization of the fact that good music has been recorded by good artists.

There is, I think, quite a need for some form of rationalization in the industry, and the present Columbia-H. M. V. amalgamation is a step in the right direction. There is nothing to be feared from such a monopoly. The benefits that should accrue from it are numerous, one of the most important being the elimination of stupid competition and duplication. Another would be an improvement in distributive machinery, which is not at present the height of success. Again valuable time and money would be saved in the perfection of new processes and the like, on account of the pooling of such huge resources. Unfortunately, amalgamation by itself is no guarantee that the silly duplication will not continue. That will depend on the policy adopted. Much has been said about the duplication of major works, and in many cases there is a lot to be said for it. The public seems to be able to stand any number of Unfinished Symphonies and Fifth Symphonies (witness Compton Mackenzie's editorial in the *Gramophone* for January, 1931). But why this should be carried to other and lesser known works is beyond me. Take the case at present of Strauss' *Bourgeois Gentilhomme.* Within a few months we have had three sets with little to choose between them. Would it not have been better if one or two of these had been "given the miss" for the time being? Imagine what the situation would have been if we had had the Sibelius First issued by Brunswick, Columbia and Victor! The issue of more versions is not likely to increase the number of persons who would buy it by any considerable margin. A point in favour of the duplication of recordings is, of course, that it often leads to better versions. But once the companies realize that it pays to get the right artist to record the work then better versions are inevitable without the necessity of duplication as we have seen it in the past few years. Fortunately this realization is coming to the companies, and much more care is generally being used than formerly.

In regard to recordings, I express a hope that the Victor Company has not forgotten its contract with Toscanini. We have not had anything from him in a long while, and when we consider his greatness, it seems rather unfortunate. With the New York Philharmonic Symphony he achieves the finest of work, yet his list of recordings is scant.

There have been considerable suggestions for recordings from the readers of the P. M. R., and I should like to add mine, small as it may seem beside such requests as the completion of the Brandenburg Concertos or more Sibelius symphonies. At a concert a few months ago by our local orchestra, a piece was played entitled *By the Tarn,* from a "Suite for Strings and Clarinet," composed by Goossens. It seemed to me to be exceptionally beautiful, and one that would be worthwhile recording. The rest of the suite I have not heard. In length, it would probably fit one side (at the most two) of a 12-inch disc. In the article "An Interview with Eugene Goossens" in the February, 1930 issue, "Observer" mentioned that Goossens was about to conduct a new work for strings with the Boston Symphony. Could this be the same? In mood, *By the Tarn* is something like the *Swan of Tuonela,* but has not the varied color and sonority of the latter, nor yet is it as elaborate.

The *Swan of Tuonela* has been more or less my introduction to the music of Sibelius, and I am glad that it has been so superlatively recorded by

Stokowski, and not allowed to be cut. I think we all agree with the Editor in condemning the Victor version of *En Saga.*

I have just purchased the new H. M. V. releases of re-recordings of Wagnerian excerpts conducted by Coates, and I recommend them to all to whom the old recordings of Siegfried's *Rhine Journey,* the *Magic Fire Music,* the *Ride of the Valkyries,* and the Prelude to Act III of *Lohengrin* were a pleasure. These new are some of the finest Wagnerian records that we have. While he is at it, I hope that he will re-record his disc of Siegfried's *Funeral Music.* To my mind, his interpretation is quite easily the best that I have heard, and the old disc was handicapped (effective as it was) by not-too-good recording. A new one could not help but be superb.

In conclusion, may I suggest that we have more articles by Observer as he always has something interesting to say.

Westmount, Quebec, Canada A. HAMILTON BOLTON

Propaganda—Prices—Merchandizing

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

It would be most regrettable were the P. M. R. to disappear because of the lack of interest of the manufacturers, considering the enthusiasm of its editorship and the interest of its readers. This is especially true in view of the fact, so ably presented in the June issue, that the difficulties of the phonograph and record business are not insoluble, apart from the temporary effects of the present general business depression.

In its June issue, the P. M. R. made specific suggestions which—coupled with those appearing other times—offer a program to the producers so plainly in line with all modern merchandising practice, that it is hard to understand why the companies have not adopted them—even originated them. Perhaps it would be worth while to review these suggestions.

1. The companies should not give up advertising, either of records or of machines. The new recording and reproducing techniques make the modern phonograph and its records a satisfactory adjunct to intelligent persons' musical life in a way in which the older products never were. This fact is not very generally appreciated. Education of the public to the new conditions of "canned music" is essential, and its method is advertising. This is not to say that every family now owning a radio for the sake of Amos 'n' Andy could be persuaded to add phonographic equipment and a growing collection of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms to its possessions. But a great deal more could be done than is done. The manufacturers advertise their radios. Why do they not advertise their phonographs, for what it is worth to them, especially in view of the fact that a phonograph owner, if properly followed up by further publicity, is a potentially *continuous* purchaser of records? Ten years ago, not a month went by that did not see the advertisement of the full list of *new* records in all newspapers, on the part of all companies. Now, when the records are in every respect better, why has this advertising been dropped? Why have the Victor company's street-car cards disappeared?—The pages in the "quality group" magazines?

2. The companies should manufacture cheaper machines. All the advertising in the world will not distribute an expensive product below a certain income level. The companies made their initial mistake when the very first "orthophonic," "viva-tonal," etc., machines were offered on the market. There was no phonograph to be bought for less than $90.00. Was this a necessary or a wise limitation to set upon the number of possible purchasers? That the retail dealers did not think so is evidenced by the fact that within a year or two, with no business depression to provide an excuse, it was possible to buy these models at 30-40 per cent off the original price. The same thing happened with the introduction of the first electric machines and combinations, save that the lowest-priced models were extremely expensive, and that the mark-down followed much more quickly. It seems almost as though the companies looked for profit more from the few "suckers" who fall for the "latest-model" racket, than from an increasing group of purchasers at the widest possible variety of income levels, all of whom thereupon remained in the market as potential record buyers.

My dealer in Washington has told me again and again of his efforts to get the companies to make a moderate-priced electrical phonograph, without radio, to sell to the large number of middle-class "prospects" who are genuine music-lovers. Only recently, after four or five years' campaigning, has he succeeded in impressing his point of view on one company. It has produced a four-tube phonograph, but wants close to $100.00 for it? Why? I suspect, from looking at it, that the price is high partly because the cabinet is bigger than it need be, and hideously over-ornamented.

Why will not the companies make a plain and efficient machine to sell for $75.00? It ought to be possible. The "works" of the hideous outfit described above can be bought *at retail* for that figure; surely the manufacturer's margin is enough to provide a simple box to put them in.

As you suggest, another means of selling machines and then records is to provide a cheap motor, turntable, and pick-up, for attachment to a radio outfit. You set $25 as a fair price to ask for it. I think you are reasonable. But the two outfits of this sort which are on the market sell respectively for $50 and $75, and have been so little advertised that few people know of their existence. Why?

Instead of going after the widest possible market by catering to low income groups, the companies tax their wits to devise elaborate "automatic" machines, at fabulous prices, in enormous cabinets which few people can house, playing only one brand of records effectively, and these only in a limited series of special pressings. Is this the lesson taught by the sales policy of Mr. Ford?

3. The price of records should be reduced. It is not generally known among record buyers that the difference between the price they pay and the cost of the record to the retailer is forty per cent. On the other hand, can it be disputed that almost the only limit on the ordinary classical record buyer's purchases is the price consideration? Why was "durium," the new cheap record-surface material, allowed to escape into the hands of a company producing only dance records, *to compete with the radio.*

at fifteen cents, instead of going into classical records, *not competing with the radio,* even at prices between 50c and $1.25?

4. Better merchandising methods must be devised. The forty per cent spread between wholesale and retail record prices noted above, is not a sign that the local dealer is rolling in ill-gotten gains. Far from it, as the number of failures, reductions of stock, and distress sales in the past four or five years indicate. It is a sign that record distribution is wastefully organised, with excessive overhead and low turnover. Various solutions suggest themselves: outlet stores run by the manufacturers; allowing the dealer a return-privilege on unsold records; least radical of all, the maintenance of *really adequate* warehouses at strategic points.

As matters stand at present, and as they have long stood, the ultimate record purchaser often has a harder time getting a record he wants than getting a passport or a liquor-manufacturing permit. The dealer, save in a few very large cities, does not carry full stocks, because of slow turnover, and because he has no return privilege on the ephemeral popular trash which the companies insist on producing in spite of their own complaints about radio "plugging." If the wholesaler or warehouse responded quickly to special orders, the dealer might still be able to keep his customers' good will. But this is far from the case. The wholesalers are slow and careless, and often do not themselves carry a full stock. I have heard this complaint from several dealers in two widely-separated centres. Indeed, I once got a foreign record through my retailer in half the time required to get a domestic release, ordered at the same time through the regular channels. Such circumstances do not encourage record buying. The customer's interest evaporates before the purchase can be completed.

To sum up: Propaganda for the phonograph and for classical records must be renewed and redoubled by the producing companies. Prices must come down —this in itself, even without advertising, will speed up turnover. And merchandising methods must be reformed, to enable the local dealer to give better service to his customers.

Washington, D. C. PAUL LEWINSON

Some Problems and a Program

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

No doubt your editorial and Mr. Allen's letter on phonographic ills will, or ought to bring down an avalanche of correspondence, much of which will be deserving of a place in the forum your magazine provides. On the chance that some of my comments to follow may also be germane to the issue, and that you may wish to print them though they will swing through a *wide* orbit, with side trips requiring courage (to print), I shall run this off and shall not even bother to have it typed. What follows will be based upon the general business experience I have accumulated during twenty years, upon my close contact with business worth hundreds of millions, upon my present status as a specialist in certain phases of public utility accounting, upon my additional present status as honorary auditor of a South American mining concern, and, specifically, upon my pursuit (aside from my income producing activities) of the unprofitable but fascinating record importing hobby which has come in two years, or less, to be known around the world as IRA; namely, International Records Agency.

I intend to touch in this letter upon every one of the points of weakness in the record business in America which my relatively long experience in things phonographic (antedating IRA) has brought to my notice. You will recall that about a year or so ago I wrote a letter to P. M. R. on the strength of which "Observer" gave me a good dressing down. I conceded subsequently that I had spoken inopportunely, but, after all, I had brought the horse into the parlor, and even if it was "bad psychology," it was, (I pat myself on the back—not joyfully), clear understanding of a bad state of affairs, and on top of that, good prophecy. Well, we were determined to try metaphysics to overcome an organic disability—with the usual result. We should have faced the facts. Let us face them now. Perhaps it is not too late to jolt an apathetic public—especially the record-buying fraternity—into a new wave of enthusiastic appreciation and acceptance of recorded music.

It is scarcely necessary for me to amplify Mr. Allen's observations on the difficulty of procuring records. I have often sent orders to the jobbers which could not be filled or out of which I received only one record! I have often wondered whether the powers that control radio are not engaged in effectuating the extermination of the record by adroitly dispersing the market for it. The direct and indirect profits from radio diffusion and equipment sales must be staggering, and they are comparatively more easy to educe than from the manufacture and sale of records. Who can question the observation, recently printed in "Disques," that what America reads it believes, and what it believes it buys? If it does not buy records, it is because its beliefs concerning them are erroneous and prejudiced. If the beliefs are erroneous and prejudiced, they are so because America has had no chance to read the truth. I lay this lack of "education" at the doors of the manufacturers of records and record reproducing apparatus. One of the most successful men in the British gramophone world confirms this view. Why don't they recognize that the time to swim is when you're in over your ears? Why don't they produce apparatus, not merely as cheaply as possible, but as *excellently* as possible? Why is there no automatic radio-phonograph on the market with an oil-damped pick-up—an instrument that would confound those who think that the acme of excellence is to be found *only* in radio? Is it impossible? *It absolutely is not.* The industry itself is remiss, you see.

Have we any reason to hope for better days? Not much, unless we make not only our wishes heard but their sincerity felt by giving the companies who manufacture records and apparatus, the people who sell them, and the publishers who discuss them, our generous support in a financial way. Money talks, and its voice is stentorian. Want to dance? Pay the piper!

Of course, it is hard to impress an industry which is not much troubled with competition. I mean by that that, according to my estimate, over ninety per cent of all record sales accrue to the benefit of the same world-wide corporate family. It is one of the phenomena of our imperceptibly gradual communization that whether we wish to communicate matters of business, social concerns, news, or plain chatter, via wire or ether; whether we take our entertainment from stage, screen or antena; whether we buy radios or tubes, refrigerators or fans, lamps or kilowatt hours—directly or indirectly we pay tribute to a single entity existing primarily for the purpose of profiting. Clearly it is not logical to expect such an entity to exert itself to achievements not thrust upon it by the sheer necessity of protecting its position in its field. Competition is in fact merely ostensible; not real.

I have, after all, to take another poke at old General Public. Old General Public passes blithely through an era of miniature automobiles, miniature radios, miniature golf, ping-pong, tabloids, short pants for men, miniature men's suits for small boys, short haired women, miniature apartments with miniature kitchens, little blue books, miniature moustachios, cafeteria meals, cheap houses in Queens, and so forth. Over its head pass the forces of time. Its opportunities, if greater, are proportionately fewer. The grade is harder to make. Those who hold power become intrenched. The suit called "government" begins to fit the body of business. The ideal of a *good* job, has given way to the aim of a *profitable* one. Business, being the government, protects the objective of profit by means of the law. Competitive foreign goods that might otherwise force domestic goods to less profitable and more meritorious levels are excluded or taxed to the point of exclusion. The duty on phonograph records is 30% ad valorem and on needles 45% plus 8c per M. By whose request? Few comparatively, of the most touted imported records are imported *directly* by those who sell them. The major companies seek to control even the trade in the products of their foreign affiliates. The public of a free—let us say—country is effectively deprived of its liberty of choice. I ask again, by whose request?

Suppose the I-don't-know-how-many thousand American readers of this letter memorialized Congress and the President to the end that a lower tariff on these goods might be promulgated. Would they not get it?

When the Hawley-Smoot tariff was in preparation I begged the Senate Committee on Finance to relax the rates on phonographic goods. My request was politely acknowledged. No action was taken although I represented that records were to be treated as artistic, cultural and educational mediums and should be made most easily accessible to all, even if it would cut into the American business in records. Though born here, I do not see any reason in the view that an American has a greater right to survive than a man of any other nationality. The man who has a right to go on is he who gives the *best value*. Such exclusions, as exist in the city of New York where even civil or mechanical engineers of gas companies can not legally connect or direct the connection of the cooling water line to a gas refrigerator unless they belong to that most ultra of fraternities, the licensed plumbers—or as would deter even an Edison or a Steinmetz from doing a bit of housewiring unless he were a licensed (and, therefore, union) electrician, result only in higher prices, imperfect development and indifferent workmanship.

Stifled under corporate exigencies, obviously stringent governmental restrictions, public ignorance and apathy, the record is in a bad way here, though not yet hopelessly so. A thing which has such incalculable value, such great merit as the record should not perish for want of fanatic zeal on the part of us who should be its evangelists. By setting the example with the purchase of modern reproducing equipment, by buying records almost to the borders of extravagance, by supporting a little beyond reason the critical publications, we can bring it back, add to its prestige, induce the improvement of the record. But we must hang on like grim death, and until some better medium of preserving audible performances materializes we must, in our own interest, remain loyal to the shellac discs and fight every force, economic, social and commercial, that threatens to deprive us of them.

I want to make it clear in closing that I intend no part of this to be construed as denunciatory of any of the institutions involved. This writing is primarily expository in a general sense, and its aim is to dispel the fallacious complacency which seems to have enveloped the—er—"music lovers" during the past year and a half, and has brought the commercial side of this highly important work almost to the point of stagnation.

Richmond Hill, N. Y. A. J. Franck

Pizzetti

(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

Reviews of New Records

Special reviews of larger works ✓ classified reviews of domestic releases

lists of new European releases ✓ current importations

Brandenburg Concerto

BACH: *Brandenburg Concerto No.* 3, in G (3 sides), played by the PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN, conducted by WILHELM FURTWAENGLER. (On the fourth side FURTWAENGLER conducts SCHUBERT: *"Rosamunde" Entr'acte in B flat.*) BRUNSWICK 90161-2 (2 D12s, $1.50 each).

While amateur Philo Vances still struggle for the solution of that most celebrated of all phonographic mysteries—The British Brunswick Brandenburg Album Dissappearance—individual recordings appear sporadically. Three of the six concertos are now available: No. 2 conducted by Stokowski, No. 6 by Wood, and the present No. 3. This particular work is perhaps the most popular of the set. Unlike the others it consists of only two movements (unless the two chords which Bach separated the two Allegros may be considered a rudimentary movement). The acoustical Polydor recording and perhaps the old H. M. V. set scrupulously retained Phrygian cadence of these two chords, whose only purpose would seem to be the momentary suggestion of a contrasting key. Furtwängler omits them; an academic sin perhaps, but hardly one that detracts much from our musical enjoyment.

The music is pure Bach, and Bach in his more glowing and exuberant mood, staunch and vigorous in the first movement, more delicately merry in the second. Small wonder that after writing two such gloriously free-hearted pieces he could not find an Adagio that might fittingly be placed with them. Unlike a good many other composers he philosophically accepted the *impasse* and let the work stand as it was. Furtwängler plays the music up to the hilt. His performance is typical of his matchlessly drilled orchestral playing, but it is considerably more than a superb bit of string choir virtuosity. Like Dr. Muck in his great days Furtwängler gets not only a machine-like precision from his men, an uncanny mastery of dynamic niceties, but through these externals he penetrates the very core of the music itself. Even and exact as the performance is, the reading might almost be called rollicking. At any rate in its very perfection of order it attains an unbounded freedom. A paradox? No more than the paradox of Bach's music itself, or the Empire State Building.

The contrast that Bach wisely neglected to supply is of necessity provided by the odd side. The *Rosamunde* Entr'acte is as good a choice as any, but I do not suggest its being played in close juxtaposition to the concerto. Heard separately and after some interval of time it gives a great deal of pleasure by its ineffably delicate nuances and the cool purity of the orchestral tone coloring. (I believe this same recording we released about a year ago by Brunswick, when it was coupled with Furtwängler's recording of the Air from Bach's suite in D. Strictly speaking it is the third Entr'acte in the incidental music of *Rosamunde,* not the second as labelled.)

Franck and Schubert Sonatas

FRANCK: *Sonata in A,* played by ALFRED DUBOIS (violin) and MARCEL MAAS (piano). COLUMBIA Masterworks Set 158 (4 D12s, Alb., $6.00).

The international Columbia companies have been very liberal with recordings of the Franck sonata. Within a few months the present set was issued in Belgium, and another by Joan Massia and Blanche Selva in France. The British Columbia chose the latter for re-pressing, but American Columbia has selected the former. I can compare the Dubois-Maas version only with that played by Thibaud and Cortot for Victor as I have not yet heard the Massia-Selva or Suzuki-Gurlitt (Polydor) sets. Dubois and Maas are members of the "Court of Belgium" Trio which has lately given us a number of ably handled ensemble recordings; Dubois has also been heard in Belgian Columbia's recording of a Vieuxtemps violin concerto. He is a dependable man—musician first and violinist second. His tone is neither unduly thin and intense nor ultra-luscious. His vibrato never degenerates into tremolo, and his interpretations are invariably intelligently conceived and worked out with a minimum of external display. Maas gives him sensitive, modest collaboration. From the point of view of musicianship, then, the present set is quite irreproachable, and the recording itself is of very pleasing quality.

The interpretative style is open to some question, however; a favorable reaction depends on the listener's individual approach to Franck's music. Dubois and Maas see only Franck's sweetness and light. Their reading is poetically tender and the animation and gaiety that others find in the sonata falls beyond their delicately drawn interpretative scheme. Even the indubitable brilliance and rush of the Allegro is tempered to fit harmoniously into this scheme. The rippling piano passages are exquisitely limpid, the two instruments are blended graciously together, but there is none of rich sonority, crispness, and verve of the Thibaud-Cortot reading. According to one's mood then the Dubois-Maas version may seem profoundly poetic or a bit languid and enervating, and the Thibaud-Cortot set in turn will seem somewhat hard and flashy or vigorously brilliant. Both have the solid merit of consistency of mood and interpretative sincerity. Remembering the acoustical Columbia version, which this by Dubois and Maas displaces, it seems to me that Catterall and Murdoch combined the gravity and compassion of the Belgians

with something of the greater animation and éclat of the Frenchmen. The two electrical recordings each present an admirable exposition of one side of Franck, but neither catches the whole man. So the Thibaud set remains the more effective concert performance, and that by Dubois the more intimate and moving bit of *kammermusik.*

R. D. D.

SCHUBERT: *Sonata in A major,* Op. 162, for violin and piano. Played by SERGEI RACHMANINOFF and FRITZ KREISLER. VICTOR Masterworks M-107. (4 D12, Alb., $8.00).

It is in this sonata, a product of 1818, that Schubert first gives as extended and important a part to the keyboard instrument as he had been doing for sometime previously in the sonata for pianoforte solo. But although in his respect, in the generally broader proportions, in the fact of the second movement's being a *scherzo* etc., makes a definite advance on the preceding opus 137, the subject matter itself is rather slight, and from an aesthetic standpoint the music is scarcely more than agreeable. Not only are the basic ideas of little interest, but, as so often, the developement is so careless and so much composed of repetition that much better ideas might well grow stale. All the repeats are here observed, which tends to accentuate this fault.

Regarding the work as a piece of spontaneous—almost extemporaneous—writing, however, and taking care not to examine into its workmanship or structure, one can find the sonata very enjoyable, although such a feat becomes more difficult with repeated hearings. Bnt fortunately, Kreisler is quite ideal for helping one to get the proper impressions. By a finished grace combined with a very essential delicate sentiment (as in the Trio), he contrives that we shall never lose the feeling of spontaneity and intimacy which must be maintained for any enjoyment of the work. Not being to the manner born, it is perhaps natural that Rachmaninoff should occasionally miss the proper spirit and tend to enlarge the music beyond its natural restricted sphere by heaviness or overemphasis (cf. the development of the first movement). All in all, however, the interpretation may be pronounced eminently suited to the music; so much so that the nearly perfect combination adds a great deal to the attractiveness of the set. The recording is of the very best for piano and violin tone, and almost always accurately balanced.

R. H. S. P.

Barber of Seville

ROSSINI: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* complete opera, sung by artists, chorus and orchestra of LA SCALA, MILAN. COLUMBIA Operatic Series No. 8 (16 D12s, Alb., $24.00). On the 32nd side is the Overture to Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro.*

Figaro	Riccardo Stracciari
Rosina	Mercedes Capsir
Il Conte D'Almaviva	Dino Borgiolo
Don Basilio	Vincenzo Bettoni
Doctor Bartolo	Salvatore Baccaloni
Berta	Cesira Ferrari
Fiorello	Attilio Bordonali
An Official	Arlstide Baracchi

Conductor—Lorenzo Molajoli
Choral Conductor—Vittore Veneziani

It is a remarkable tribute to the vitality of the music of the *Barber of Seville* that it has existed to the present day, for it represents all the vices of the school of opera which disappeared with the advent of the greater Verdi and Wagner. Rossini was received with a storm of abuse when he eliminated the right of the solo singer to interpolate original cadenzas but he certainly wrote in enough to satisfy the most florid nightingale of song that ever trilled a shake. Probably only a composer of his immense popularity could have made such a "reform," but even in the *Barber* Rosina chooses her own fiorature for the Lesson scene, for the original music for this scene was lost.

The *Barber* was written in thirteen days and the first performance was a triumph of mistakes and futility (a cat broke up the first-act finale), but Rossini—little daunted—went home to sleep as though it was a colossal success and the second performance justified his faith. He always considered the opera, which was originally titled *Almaviva,* his best work and thought it the most likely to survive.

He, too, practiced the device of borrowing from early operas and many a melody which has become famous in one of his later works has already seen the light of day in a former work. "Ecco ridente in cielo" from the *Barber* is one of these. In turn it was used in the oratorio, "Ciro in Babilonia," later as a chorus in "Aureliano in Palmiro," and finally in the guise in which it now stands. The overture to "Aureliano in Palmiro" was later used as prelude to his *Elizabeth, Queen of England,* and finally as the overture to the *Barber of Seville.* It is any wonder that this style of opera gave way easily to the greater dramatic composers whose works we know so well today?

After numerous objections to the more dramatic styles of music as recorded for the phonograph, it would be naturally assumed that a lighter type of music such as the present opera would be ideal recorded fare. It is not possible to say that this is the case. Even the fine voice of a Borgioli and the great experience of a Stracciari aided by the orchestra of the excellent Molajoli who has given so many splendid operatic recorded moments cannot help us. It is difficult to say why. Perhaps the music being so essentially lyric needs the operatic setting and action to enhance it. It certainly is not the fault of the individual performers who are all adequate. I give the palm to Borgioli for his beautiful singing and to Stracciari, although his once glorious voice is far from its best. Both Baccaloni's Bartolo and Signora Ferrari's Berta are excellent genre studies, very much in the spirit of the Beaumarchais comedy. I cannot be enthusiastic about the acidulous Rosina of Mercedes Capsir. I care for her voice even less than in *Traviata.* Certainly there must be some light soprano better than she available for these performances. Pampanini and Scacciati are both splendid. There should be a coloratura to match them.

The ensembles, however, are very well done and the purely orchestral parts, too, although the tiny little tempest near the close of Act 2 will amuse those who are familiar with the gigantic nature studies of Wagner, and Verdi or even Rossini in *William Tell.*

RICHARDSON BROWN

Kinderscenen

SCHUMANN: *Scenes from Childhood,* Op. 15, played by JONNY AUBERT. BRUNSWICK 90169-70 (2 D12s, $1.50 each).

The recording of Schumann's larger works proceeds slowly and laboriously. This is the first to appear since Fanny Davis' set of the *Davidsbündlertänze* and the Godowsky and Rachmaninoff *Carnaval* sets. Miss Davies recorded the *Kinderscenen* a couple of years ago, but unlike the concerto and *Davidsbündler* albums it was not issued in this country. Brunswick comes to the rescue with admirably prompt re-pressing of the Polydor version issued in Europe only a month or two ago. It is a delight to have phonographic access to these charming lyrics. Much of Schumann strikes us today as unpleasantly indigestible adolescent romanticism, dripping with unashamed sentimentality, but the brief children's pieces retain their artistic integrity. For all their simplicity and tender sentiment, the purity of their line, the exuberant yet shy heartfulness of their humor keep them unspoiled. There is no suggestion of decay or of immaturity. For once Schumann truly entered into a musical kingdom of heaven, and even in this mechanistic age it is impossible to listen unmoved to his understanding revelation of the poetic fancy of a child's soul.

Jonny Aubert, a pianist new to recording, avoids the pitfalls that wait concert pianists who have the temerity to play this most thoroughly unconcertlike music. If "Träumerei" is taken over-slowly, its expressiveness never degenerates into unctuousness or emotionalism. For the rest one has only the liveliest praise. The delicacy, the humor, the gusto, the fancifulness, all the music's qualities are caught to perfection. Mr. Aubert neither plays up nor down to the music. He approaches it seriously but not solemnly, and moves unflurriedly from the graceful songfulness of say "At the Fireside" to the gloriously determined rhythm of the "Knight of the Hobby Horse." The recording is of the best Brunswick-Polydor quality, transmitting undistorted the pianist's delicately sure—but not studied—treatment of part writing, dynamic contracts, and phrasing. Listen to "Frightening," for example, for an exposition of many pianistic virtues—in miniature perhaps, but revealed more cleanly here than in the bravura passages of vastly more pretentious music. I want to hear more from Mr. Aubert. He seems on first hearing as if he might fairly be placed in that inner circle of pianists—Hess, Kathleen Long, Howard-Jones, Harriet Cohen, Gieseking, Kentner—for whom I should gladly exchange nine-tenths of the scintillating and celebrated giants of the keyboard.

Harpsichord Concerto

DE FALLA: *Concerto for Harpsichord, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin, and Violoncello,* played by MANUEL DE FALLA, and M. MOYSE, BONNEAU, GODEAU, DARRIEUX, and CRUQUE. COLUMBIA 67922-3 (2 D12s, $2.00 each).

I must confess that the de Falla harpsichord concerto has been a hard musical nut for me to crack. I got off to a bad start, for when I first heard it in 1926, played by Landowska, I was strongly repelled. But each time I heard the present discs my convictions of its ugliness and dryness crumble. In fact I'm beginning to find its extreme saltiness very stimulating, and its concise, jabbing rhythms highly exhilarating. But even if one were not to like it (and it most decidedly will not impress on first hearing by its aimiability or plastic charm), one must hail it as a marked evolution in de Falla's style. *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and *El Retablo* revealed a great development of his earlier idiom, piquant and vivacious as that was and the concerts goes far in the direction indicated in these two works.

The genesis of the concerto is interesting. When Landowska visited de Falla in Granada in 1922 he was working on *Retablo* and sought her advice in connection with the part he was writing for the harpsichord in the puppet play. Her enthusiastic description of the various possibilities of the instrument and her playing stimulated de Falla to embark on the composition of a concerto for harpsichord. It was not finished until three years later and into the writing went the finest work of de Falla's matured creative mind. As in the *Gardens* there is no attempt to write a concerto in the modern sense, nor yet to approximate exactly the structure of the classical concerto. There is none of the fluent Iberianisms here that are popularly associated with the music of Spain, yet it is more deep-rootedly Spanish, in both character and form than the obviously nationalistic *Three-Cornered Hat* and *El amor brujo.* In the words of Juan M. Thomas, de Falla "with a far more finished technique at his command, and liberated from the minor German influences and romanticism of his master (Pedrell), penetrates deeply into the genuinely Hispanic music; he seeks relationship with the 16th and 17th centuries, and through a process of continual concentration and profound introspection he produces a work of such transcendency for Spanish music: the present concerto. . . . In none of the three movements of which it is composed does an iconoclastic impression make itself felt. Rhythm, tonality, melodic and thematic development all follow traditional lines. In spite of this, the whole texture possesses a newness and force which are to be found only in the best pages of Stravinsky. The classical form, instead of blindly following the scholastic formulas, evolves naturally by the logic which governs the freedom and facility of the development. What is particularly noticeable is the melodic simplicity, the suggestive modal character, and above all the rhythmical form of the themes. Those of the first movement, Allegro, are taken straight from Catalan-Andalusian folk-lore, and their coloring is entirely romantic and mediaeval. In the Lento the color of the Middle Ages are intensified; the final movement, Vivace, as a contrast, moves with delicious freedom in the 18th century. . . . This latest work of de Falla produces a definite impression of clearness and sonority. It is sombre, austere, religious, with evocations of the past and vivid examples of modernism. I may, of course, be mistaken, but I am of the opinion that by following this path, de Falla has given us the connecting link which unites in a definite manner modern Spanish art with the century of Victoria and Cabezón."

I offer Mr. Thomas' quotation more as a suggestion for examining of concerto than as a definitive

analysis. With it should be read the shrewd yet glowing words of René Lévy in his Paris Letter to the March P. M. R. With him I agree that the concerto is the very prototype of modern music for the phonograph—sounding even better on discs than in a direct hearing, due to the particular aptitude of the phonograph in recording the peculiar timbres of the harpsichord and wind instruments. A thoughtful study of the work as presented so ably here by the composer and a group of distinguished French soloists—splendidly recorded—gradually builds up an impression of supremely concentrative writing, an energetic exploration of an almost inexhaustible source of tonal color qualities, and an alert, nervous, witty rhythmical life-force. I hear Moussorgsky as well as the Middle Ages in the Lento, and I feel that Mr. Thomas finds too much austerity and religiosity in the music—at the expense of its sly, wry wit, and its irreverent insolence. There is little that is churchly or even spiritual in the finale; I nourish the suspicion it is even slightly Rabelasian. And the close is much too proud and egotistic to find favor with the angels. . . .

A stimulating work—one that may be of very profound importance in modern music. It requires active and alert ears, and I am grateful for the advantage of phonographic repetition for the destruction of my first and unthinking dismissal of its acridity as ugliness, and its terseness as dryness.

(My review copy of the second disc has the labels switched. The completion of the Lento is given as part 4 instead of 3). R. D. D.

Le Chasseur Maudit

FRANCK: *Le Chasseur Maudit* (three parts), and INDY: *Fervaal,* Introduction to Act One, Op. 45. Played by the LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS, conducted by ALBERT WOLFF. BRUNSWICK 90167-8. (2 D-12s, $1.50 each).

Although not among César Franck's most important or typical works, the *Chasseur Maudit* is sufficiently well-known, though one would scarcely imagine that present-day audiences could continue to find it very impressive. The piece is founded on Buerger's ballad "Der wilde Jaeger," and does its best to depict the varied scenes hinted at by the following programme note: "It is Sunday morning; from afar come the joyous sound of bells, and the joyous songs of the people. Sacrilege! The wild Count of the Rhine has wound his horn. The chase dashes through cornfields, brakes and meadows. "Stop, Count, I pray, hear the pious songs. 'No!' and the horsemen rush onward. Suddenly the Count is alone; his horse will go no further; he blows his horn, and the horn sounds no longer. . . . A lugubrious implacable voice curses him: 'Sacrilege,' it says, 'thou shalt be forever hunted through Hell.' Then flames dart from everywhere. . . . The Count, maddened by terror, flees more and more quickly, pursued by a pack of devils." An odd subject for the pseudo-mystic one is tempted to say; and in truth, the result is not of the most startling realistic nature. Even Franck's most devout worshippers (viz. Vincent d'Indy) pass over this work with the mere mention that, written in 1883, it was performed the next year, and lay stress on the fact that because of his own angelic nature, the Master was unequal to the task of portraying devils or wicked beings successfully. Liszt with such a subject might have produced another of his magnificent pieces of bombast, but not so the composer of *Psyché et Eros.* There are some typically Franckian melodic and harmonic passages, especially in the first section, but on the whole one's impression is of not wholly successful "movie"-music. Some of this lack of success might be attributed to the conductor, and I should not find it difficult to believe that he was not entirely convinced of what he was playing. Yet he seems to employ all the vigour required, and he has already shown how extremely suited to the depicting of horrors he was in *A Night on Bald Mountain.* The recording is very good, but only such as we have come to consider standard.

The *Fervaal* excerpt is from Vincent d'Indy's best known opera, produced near the beginning of the century. The music is characterized by an over-ripeness which is best described by the term "fruity." Wolff makes an excellent job of it, however, in so far as there is anything for him to do, and the recording is of extreme richness, giving due attention to the instrumental solos several times called for.

R. H. S. P.

Schmitt Salome

SCHMITT: *La Tragédie de Salomé,* played by the ORCHESTRE DES CONCERTS STRARAM conducted by FLORENT SCHMITT. COLUMBIA Masterworks Set 157 (4 D12s, Alb., $8.00).

The January 1931 P. M. R. contained an extensive analysis of work by William H. Seltsam. The complete program of the ballet was reprinted and a comparison was drawn between the two recorded versions, that conducted by Coppola for Victor, and the present composer's version—then available only in imported pressings. Coppola's performance was taken in much brisker pace than this, and occupies only six instead of eight sides. For the rest honors go undisputedly to the composer despite the general competence of the other version. This is a particularly beautiful piece of recording, not as realistic as many perhaps, as impressive, or even as well contrasted in timbre and nuance niceties. But it is a marvellous bit of recording homogenity—variations in quality among the various sides have been reduced to the minimum. The work hangs together perfectly and falls ever so smoothly on the ear. It is one of the very few sets of records to which I find it a pleasure to listen without hearing the music at all—that it, listening as one entirely illiterate in occidental music might, hearing only strands and masses of tone rather than an organized musical scheme. As for the music itself, for all its suggestions of an alliterative trio of composers, Strauss, Scriabin and Strawinski, it has some individual note of its own. It is capably conceived and worked out: an admirable choreographic tone poem. I do not find much to admire in it, but perhaps the sensuous quality of the recorded performance has beguiled me from giving the score itself proper attention. Yet I suspect that my pleasure would be lessened rather than increased by a more cerebral examination of the music.

ORCHESTRA

LISZT: *Les Préludes.* BRUNSWICK 90163-4 (2 D12s, $1.50 each). *Mazeppa.* BRUNSWICK 90167-8 (2 D12, $1.50 each). Both played by the PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA OF BERLIN, conducted by OSKAR FRIED.

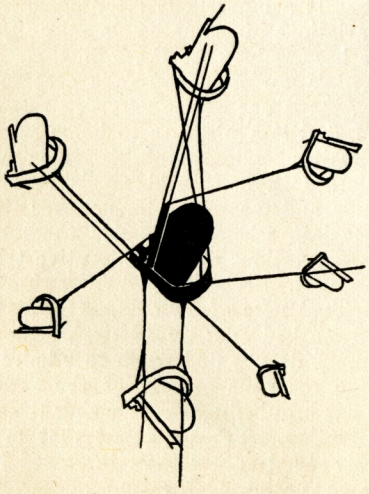
Old friends that—unlike wine—hardly improve with age. Both were once prominent fixtures in the orchestral repertory (the first was inextricably identified with the Mengelberg epoch), but lately they seldom appear on standard symphonic programs. The standards for their performance were set once for all by Mengelberg (with *Les Préludes*) and Dr. Muck (*Mazeppa*). Today the music has sadly faded and contemporaneous dissonance makes the wildness of Mazeppa's ride and the bombastic close of *Les Préludes* sound more than a trifle impotent. Yet virtuoso conductors still mount the old war-horses and set them galloping through their paces. Fried is not a Muck or Mengelberg, but he does a good forthright job. These discs are good routine readings, competently recorded Lisztiana. The less familiar *Mazeppa,* in particular, may well find a substantial public.

VON FLOTOW: *Martha—Overture,* played by a Symphony Orchestra conducted by DR. WEISSMANN. COLUMBIA G-50296-D. (D12, $1.25).

Dr. Weissmann runs through the time-worn Martha overture without great gusto. At anything above a mezzo-forte the recording weakens the body of orchestral tone considerably. Only a few of the more delicate passages reveal the able hand of Weissmann in characteristic form.

GOLDMARK: *Rustic Wedding Symphony,* Op. 26, played by the VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA conducted by ROBERT HEGER. VICTOR Masterpiece Set M-103 (5 D12s, Alb., $7.50).

Issued earlier in the Educational Series, Goldmark's Symphony-Suite now appears in the general Victor release. It was reviewed in detail by R. B. in the June P. M. R. The music is unpretentious, melodic without suavity, simple without childishness, played and recorded in irreproachable manner. Altogether a model recording of its kind, and surely a definitive edition of the work for some years to come.



INSTRUMENTAL

Piano

DELIUS: *Mazurka and Waltz for a Little Girl; Waltz; Toccata* (from "Five Piano Pieces") played by *Evlyn Howard-Jones.* COLUMBIA 2460-D (D10, 75c).

Delius' few pieces for the piano are the briefest, the tiniest of miniatures. The present disc and Columbia 2343-D released last January comprise practically his entire writing for keyboard alone. The present group—four of the five short pieces published by Universal—was issued in England during the Delius Festival in 1929. I hope that its American release is prompted by at least a fair public reception of the companion disc (containing three preludes and the *Harpsichord Piece* when I discussed in some detail in the January 1931 P. M. R.). The *Toccata* and *Mazurka and Waltz for a Little Girl* were written in 1923, as were the preludes; the other waltz goes back to 1891. It is interesting to see how even the early piece, simple as it is, anticipates the latter, more developed Delian mood. The delicate, graceful *Toccata* is more characteristic, although it too is the veriest fragment—like the preludes, a glinting spark thrown off from the anvil on which were forged the vast structure of *Sea Drift* and the *Mass of Life.* Lucky the little girl for whom the Wordsworth and Proust of music turned aside to jot down the fanciful *Mazurka and Waltz!* Note how the latter, for all superficial reminiscences of Massenet and a host of salon composers, has a purity of sentiment that distinguishes even the slightest page from this magical pen.

As with the other disc I should stress the point that these pieces are no proper introduction to Delius' music. The four here lack even the subtlety of the harmonic texture of the dance for the harpsichord, but like it, these will be cherished as a revelation of the more light-hearted side of a composer who always has looked inward; to whom the

> earth we pace
> Again appears to be
> As unsubstantial, faery place.

As before we are grateful to Mr. Howard-Jones for a graciously perfect re-creation of the poet's light-winged fancy.

R. D. D.

CHOPIN: *Polonaise in E flat minor,* Op. 26, No. 2, played by IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI. VICTOR 7391 (D12, $2.00) (Victor Record-of-the-month).

As Paderewski's career draws to a close it seems more and more unlikely that he will leave a legacy of major recordings. Perhaps it would be unkind that he should be remembered by performances recorded after the height of his skill has been left behind, yet it would be even more unjust if he were to be remembered only by the present repertory of miniatures and show pieces. The present polonaise disc is perhaps the most important we have yet had, and yet one wishes he might have chosen instead the later and infinitely greater Polonaise in F sharp minor, Op. 44, whose sombre, tragic mood is foreshadowed by the E flat minor work, but whose canvas is of incomparably greater spread. One cavils also at the apparently pointless cut at the

end of the first side, only of some eight bars to be sure, but so absolutely unnecessary for reasons of space conservation. The playing here is the best we have had from Paderewski on records for some time, powerful and dramatic, admirably contrasted, with the crisper passages taken with the rhythmical incisiveness so essential to the nationalistic flavor of the music. Only a Pole can play this music properly and Paderewski is still the greatest pianist of his race.

Violin

HUBAY: *Concerto in G minor*—Adagio and Scherzo, played by EFREM ZIMBALIST, with piano accompaniment. COLUMBIA 50297-D (D12, $1.25).

A complete version of the Hubay concerto with orchestra is hardly essential to the recorded violin repertory; it is fairly enough represented by the present excerpts played to piano accompaniment. Zimbalist plays them with his usual competence, augmented in the scherzo by considerable animation and virtuosic flourish. As in his previous discs the violin records none too felicitously, especially in the more vigorously fiddled passage work.

MASSENET: *Thaïs—Meditation,* and Rimsky-Korsakow: *Le Coq d'Or*—Hymn to the Sun, played by MISCHA ELMAN, with piano accompaniments by JOSEF BONIME. VICTOR 7392 (D12, $2.00).

It was not unappropriate that the review copy of this record should be cracked when I received it. The music itself long ago began to disintegrate. Yet I suppose there is still a flagging demand. . . . Elman's performances should satisfy it to perfection. The most passionate admirer of the music could ask no more in the way of slickness and suavity in both the oily song of the meditation or the ballerina-like pirouettes, roulades, and chromatic sideslips of Rimsky's pseudo-oriental hymn. The syrupy tone records only too well. Surely true perfection in violin recording lies between the extremes of blandness and shrillness as exemplified by the present Elman and Zimbalist discs.

Léhar

(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

OPERATIC

PARSIFAL—*But One Weapon There Is* (Act 3), sung in French by GEORGES THILL, and LOHENGRIN—*The Blissful Song is O'er* (Act 3), sung in French by MARISE BEAUJON and GEORGES THILL, with orchestral accompaniments. COLUMBIA 50294-D (D12, $1.25).

Thill is one of the best present-day heroic tenors and it is fortunate that his American appearances have led to a better representation of his records in this country. Parsifal's great air from the last pages of the opera, as he heals Amfortas' wound, just before the opening of the shrine, is given a splendidly noble performance, augmented by the superb orchestral playing and the strong recording. The familiar love duet from the third act of *Lohengrin* is done with the same tonal breadth and steadiness. Mme. Beaujon, remembered for her earlier recording of the church scene from *Faust* is an able companion for Thill and the orchestra again provides an excellently turned background. A worthy disc for the best Wagnerian record libraries.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger—Preislied* and *Am stillen Herd,* sung in German by ALFRED PICCAVER, with orchestral accompaniments under the direction of JULIUS PRUEWER. BRUNSWICK 90171 (D12, $1.50).

The two contest songs from the greatest musical comedy ever written both splendidly sung by the famous American tenor of the Vienna State Opera. These two arias fill a gap in the recording of these excerpts as there have been very few previous adequate versions and these passages are among the finest in the work. The orchestra is not overpoweringly brilliant but at least forms a fine background for the singer's voice.

It is difficult to understand why a tenor of the attainments of this American singer who has sung with unique success the leading roles at the Vienna Opera for many years should never have sung for any length of time in his native country. Even if good German tenors were plentiful here it would be puzzling, but with the present tendency for bleating and squalling, it is entirely incomprehensible.

VERDI:—*Otello—Salce, Salce* and *Ave Maria,* sung by ELIZABETH RETHBERG with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR (D12, $2.00).

The opera *Otello* is one of the operatic masterpieces. Verdi, strongly under the influence of Wagner, wrote the Shakespearian tragedy with a sweep and power, a feeling for characterization, with a splendid orchestral background quite alien to his earlier Italian style. Reading over a study of this great composer written in the early eighties it states that the composer was now ready to give to the world his greatest works. How truly it spoke, for in *Otello* (1887) and in *Falstaff* (1893) Verdi completely threw overboard the shackles of conventional Italian opera and appeared in his true glory. The thematic idea, while never as important as in the Wagnerian operas, is used very skillfully for dramatic effect and there is practically no break in the flow of the music.

Rosa Ponselle made one of her greatest acoustical records of this scene in the final act of the opera when Desdemona sensing an approaching tragedy sings the pathetic song of the willows and the hauntingly beautiful prayer before the Madonna. The present record is intended, no doubt to replace this. It is in fact by far the finest record that Madame Rethberg has made. Her voice has the timbre one has been accustomed to associate with her on the operatic stage. She sings the music with the superbly sustained breath, the ravishing tonal quality, and the delicately, controlled emotion that few singers of the present day can hope to equal. Personally I could never replace Miss Ponselle's recording. Rather I should hope to own them both. And I should like to recall Rosa Raisa's performance of this scene. No one who ever heard her do it will ever forget her glorious voice and art.

SONGS

HERZNER-LOEHNER-SMITH-LEHAR: *Yours is my Heart Alone* (from "The Land of Smiles"), and REISCH-ROBINSON-YOUNG-STOLZ: *Two Hearts* (from "Two Hearts in Waltz Time"), sung in English by RICHARD CROOKS, with orchestral accompaniments. VICTOR 1509 (D10, $1.50).

When a popular German hit appears in this country it apparently calls for more re-write men than a talkie scenario. Whether too many cooks have spoiled the broth will be a matter of taste, but even the most confirmed admirers of the German versions (especially "Dein ist mein ganzes Herz" as sung by Richard Tauber) will have to admit that Crooks and these English versions are surprisingly good. They are a little late, however. Crooks introduced the Léhar piece to this country over two years ago, and the peak of popularity of the Stolz hit is already passed (although the song itself seems destined to be a perennial favorite). But, however tardy these are to be welcomed as the best English recordings of these delightful melodies that we are likely to have. The disc should have a lively sale, for the German versions have naturally been restricted to a comparatively small audience.

CHORAL

Platoff's Song (Old Cossack Song), and PASCHENKO: *In the Forest* sung in Russian by the DON COSSACKS, conducted by SERGE JAROFF. COLUMBIA 50295-D (D12, $1.25).

The early electrical recordings of the Russian Symphonic Choir anticipated to a large extent the brilliant effects of the Don Cossacks Choir with less obvious striving for sheer display. Yet it is still thrilling to hear such effects caught on records. Of the present pieces I much prefer the quiet Paschenko work with its splendid recording of powerful basses —here happily restrained. The Platoff song is of the sensational type in which the Don Cossacks excel in concert, but the concert hall rather than records is its proper place. Here its showmanship is too obvious; its mad shouts and whistles provide scant purely musical pleasure. R. B.

FOREIGN

There is an interesting group of Columbia green label recordings this month with a variety that should appeal to anyone who cares for lighter music. Waldteufel is represented by his *Goldregen* waltz, coupled with the bright *Wedding of the Winds* played by Edith Lorand and her orchestra (G 59076), who have been appearing this season in London with great success.

There is a wide variety of recordings by Dajos Bela, the best of which is Selections from the *Czarads Princess* by Emmerich Kalman (G 59074-F) a potpourri of unusually delightful tunes, the second side of which is to be starred. (Do you remember *Die Bajadere?* if so, this music is almost as charming.) The Dajos-Bela Künstler Orchestra plays selections from Léhar's *Schön ist die Welt* and although the music does not compare with the *Land of Smiles* and *Fredericka,* it is attractive and very well played (G 5237-F) Dajos Bela Aritsts Orchestra with xylophon solo plays the *Wedding of the Roses* and on the reverse side the International Orchestra under the direction of Robert Hood Bowers plays the *Skater's Waltz* (59072). This record is chiefly notable for its polyglot labels, in English, German, Greek and Hungarian, so no one will be slighted.

The eminent Dr. Weissmann and the Grand Symphony orchestra of Berlin step down a bit this month and offer a March Revue *Hurrah! Here Comes the Music*—by Carl Zimmer (G 59075-F and Keler *Bela's Hungarian Lustpiel* Overture (G 59073-F). The first is what we would call a characteristic number full of sensational effects and banal melody, the second is perhaps a little better musically. It also contains the alarming information on the label that it is played by an instrumental symphony orchestra. Do you suppose that someone suspected it sung by a vocal symphonic choir?

POPULAR—DANCE

Consideration of this month's popular, dance, and tonfilm records has been deferred to the next issue.

Ruhlmann

(from a caricature by Dr. Ricardo M. Aleman)

New European Releases

Orchestral

Beethoven: Second Symphony, Krauss-Vienna Philharmonic (H. M. V.)
Chopin: Concerto No. 2, F minor, Rubinstein—London Symphony (H. M. V.)
Enesco: Roumanian Rhapsody; Roumanian Poem, Georgescu—Bucarest Philharmonic.
Franck: Redemption—Interlude, Concerts Poulet (Fr. Parl.)
Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 4, Harty—Halle Orch. (Eng. Col.)
Mozart: Piano Concerto in A, Rubinstein—London Symphony (H. M. V.)
Mozart: Piano Concerto in F, Georges Boskoff—Paris Philharmonic (Parlo.)
Prokofieff: Love of Three Oranges; Chout, Concerts Poulet (Parlo.)
Ravel: La Valse, Wolff-Lamoureux orch. (Brunswick-Polydor), and Coppola—Paris Conservatory (H. M. V.)
Ravel: Tombeau de Couperin, Coppola (Fr. H.M.V.)
Rossini: La Gazza Ladra—overt., Furtwängler—Berlin Philharmonic (Brunswick-Polydor).
Saint-Saëns: Samson Ballet Music, Wolff—Lamoureux orch. (Brunswick-Polydor).
Strawinski: Suite No. 2—March, Waltz, Polka, Galop, Pierné—Concerts Colonne (Fr. Odeon).
Turina: Sevilla, Odeon orch. (Odeon).
Vivaldi: Concerto B minor for violin, organ, and orch. (Fr. Parlo.)
Wagner: Tristan and Isolde—Prelude and Love-death, Furtwängler — Berlin Philharmonic (Brunswick-Polydor).
Wagner: Götterdämmerung — Siegfried's Rhine Journey, Coates—London Symphony (H.M.V.)

Chamber Music

Mozart: Trio No. 3 in E, Court of Belgium Trio (Belgian Col.)
Mozart: Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord, Grete Eweler—Aline Ehlers (Parlo.)
Turina: Trio No. 1, Court of Belgium Trio (Belgian Col.)

Piano

Beethoven: "Waldstein" Sonata, Lamond (H.M.V.)
Beethoven: Andante Favori, Murdoch (H.M.V.)
Chopin: Eight Mazurkas (Op. 56, No. 1, 67-3, 63-3, 68-3, 59-3, 30-2, 68-2, 67-4), Niedzielski (H.M.V.)
Chopin: Ballades Nos. 2 and 4, Casadesus (Fr. Col.)
Chopin: Etudes in A flat and G flat; Valse in A flat, Sigrid Schneevoight (Ultraphon).
Chopin: Impromptu A flat, Preludes Nos. 3 and 6; Etude Op. 25, No. 12, Brailowsky (Brunswick-Polydor).
Chopin: Scherzo C sharp minor, Levitzki (H.M.V.)
Debussy: Toccata C minor; Chopin Waltz E minor, Brailowsky (Brunswick-Polydor).
Nin: Danse Ibérienne, Joquin Nin (Fr. Odeon).
Schumann: Traumeswirren; Mendelssohn: Scherzo E minor, Brailowsky (Brunswick-Polydor).

Choral

Bach: Cantata No. 78—Jesu Der Du Meine Seele, Reinhart Choir (Dutch Col.)
Coleridge-Taylor: Hiawatha—Death of Minnehaha, Sargent—Royal Choral Society (H.M.V.)
Pergolesi: O quam tristis and Quando corpus (Musica Sacra)

Operatic

Elisir d'amore (abridged opera), La Scala (Italian Col.)
Ernani (abridged opera), La Scala (It. Col.)
Merrie England (abridged), cond. Edward German (Eng. Col.)
Roi Pausole (Honegger), excerpts (Fr. Odeon).
Vie Parisienne (abridged), Urban-Brégis-Coiffier-Oudart (Fr. Col.)
Don Carlos—O don fatale; Martini: Plaisir d'amour, Marion Anderson (H.M.V.)
Figaro—Und Susanna komt nicht, Seinemeyer (Parlo.)
Semele—Where'er You Walk; Dido and Aeneas—When I am Laid in Earth, Olga Haley (Parlo.)
Roméo et Juliette—Ballad of Queen Mab and Capulet's Lament, M. Endreeze (Parlo.)

Songs

Bach: Cantata No. 39—Höchster was ich habe, Noordewier-Reddingius (Dutch Col.)
Bach: Cantata No. 157—Süsser Trost, Noordewier—Reddingius (Dutch Col.)
Bartok: Hungarian Folksongs and Ballads, sung by Vilma Medgyaszay and Maria Basilides to the composer's piano accompaniments (Hung H. M. V.)
Beethoven: Die Ehre Gottes; Handel: Cantata con stromenti, Schlusnus (Brunswick-Polydor).
Beethoven: Die Ehre Gottes; Bitten; Gottes Macht, Emil Schipper (H. M. V.)
Brahms: Album of 10 songs, Elena Gerhardt H. M. V.)
Labis: Potpourri d'Alain Gerbault, Yvonne Printemps (Fr. H. M. V.)
Moussorgsky: Trepak; Sieroff: Merry Butterweek, Chaliapin (H. M. V.)
Pergolesi: Se tu m'ami; Paradies: Quel ruscelletto, Hina Spani (H. M. V.)
Scarlatti: Se Florindo Fedele; Caccini: Amarilli, Spani (H. M. V.)
Schubert: Hirt auf dem Felsen, Lotte Schöne (H. M. V.)

Diction

Mirabeau: Les Affaires sont les Affaires, Maurice de Féraudy (Pathe)
Pages choisies, album of miscellaneous recitations, Sacha Guitry (Fr. H. M. V.)

Organ

Bach: Toccata and Fugue in C, G. D. Cunningham (H. M. V.)

Current Importations

Records for the Eye

My caption should more exactly be "Flexible Records," but the purely visual beauty of the group of *Colorit* and *Esta* discs I have just received from IRA impresses far more than their strictly technical and musical interest. Unqualified first prize goes to the Tri-Ergon Company (Austria) for its transparent "Colorit" discs. The two I have are respectively a golden lemon color and an orangeade bronze, absolutely fascinating to look at by reason of the remarkable pattern traced by the two faces of sound tracks, and considerably enhanced by the shiny cellophane envelope in which they come. The bronze colored disc in particular is really worthy of framing—an apt wall decoration for the complete phonophile. Incidentally it is not a bad record musically. The St. Gallier String Quartet plays the Romanze from Brahms Quartet in C minor, Op. 51, No. 1, and does a thoughtful, darkly colored performance (No. 3161). The lemon disc (No. 3129) contains two stock Rigoletto arias—"La Donna é mobile" and "Questa o quella"—sung by Cav. Salvatore Salvati, with orchestral accompaniments: pleasant enough routine singing. Both discs are quite well recorded, and although they are quite pliant, the pitch waver inseparable from any but a stiff disc (and not always from them!) is not excessive. There is some surface noise, but not a great deal, nor of a highly raspy quality. Pathe "Cellodisc" No. 0654 is equally pliant, but of black opaque celluloid, with no particular appeal to the eye. Villabella, tenor of the Paris Opéra, sings the Cavatina, "Ah* lève-toi soleil" from Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and "Le Rêve" from Massenet's *Manon* in powerful, rather pretentious fashion. The orchestra is rather better than in the Colorit disc, but the surface noise is more marked. On both sides the conductor's raps for attention have been caught by the microphone in the very first grooves.

From the Esta Company (Czechoslovakia) comes a group of three discs, flexible and unbreakable but not as pliable as the others, non-translucent, but colored respectively light-green, dark-green, and cardinal red. These discs are slightly heavier in body than either the Colorit or Pathé records. On E-171, Dr. J. Kalvach sings selections from Smetana's "Bartered Bride"—in Bohemian—accompanied by an apparently rather small orchestra conducted by Fr. Smid. Jenik Miroslav, lyric tenor of the Prague Opera, sings Jenika's air, "Jak mozna verit" from the "Bartered Bride," and the Song of India from Rimsky-Korsakow's *Sadko* (in Bohemian) on E-124. On M-147 Agostino Garavello, basso of La Scale, sings—in Italian—the "Dio dell' Or" from *Faust* and the "Fuggitivo tremante" from *Mignon*. The last disc is quite powerfully recorded and Garavello gives strong, broad performances. The orchestra here is rather better than in the other two records, and the singing of more professional calibre, although the Smetana are naturally of greater musical interest. There is comparatively little surface noise to the Esta discs, but they are less free from pitch waver, partially from the flexible nature of the disc, partly from the none too exact centration.

With all these discs—and the other flexible brands so popular on the continent today—one must use either a special needle (semi-dull and bent in shape) or a loud tone needle that has previously been blunted a bit by playing through an ordinary shellac record.

The flexible record is obviously restrained from great musical significance by its tendency to pitch unsteadiness, but its unbreakable quality and—in such discs as the Colorit—its extreme attractiveness to the eye should give it a very definite place in the phonographic scheme of things. It is surprising that they have not yet been introduced to any great extent in this country for they possess nearly all the advantages of Durium records with a far more interesting variety of material, and an infinitely more pleasing appearance. If only for the novelty collectors should add one of the Colorit records to their collection. Perhaps in time we shall have say "sport" editions of important recordings beside the pressings. There should be a place for them especially for camp and outing use.

Piano

CHOPIN: *Nocturne in F sharp minor,* and *Mazurka in C sharp minor,* played by ROSA ETKIN. Tri-Ergnon TE-1074 (D12, Imported).

MENDELSSOHN: *Bees' Wedding* and *Hunting Song,* and CHOPIN: *Polonaise in A major,* played by PETER YENOVITCH with the METROPOLITAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by STANLEY CHAPPLE. BROADCAST TWELVE 5221 (D10, Imported).

CHOPIN: *Nocturne in E flat,* and GODARD: *Le Cavalier Fantastique,* Op. 42, played by JANE MESSIER. Perfectaphone (D10, Imported).

The Tri-Ergnon disc is the most ambitious of the above imported group, and one of the larger Mazurkas is always on records, but I do not find Fräulein Etkin's playing greatly to my taste. It lacks flexibility and animation, and the mazurka side is handicapped further by thick recording. For those who can stand Mendelssohnian morceaux and the Chopin "Military" Polonaise orchestrally augmented, the Broadcast Twelve disc may give some pleasure, for the pieces are tossed off with considerable vigor and the arrangements have been made in reasonably good taste—if any such arrangement may be said to be in good taste. Mlle. Messier's playing of two ancient salon favorites—one still unburied—is of a considerably higher order. The Godard piece is taken with good clean-cut energy, and indeed sounds quite well, while the eternal nocturne is played with a crispness and lack of sentiment that are decidedly refreshing. The recording here, too, is cleaner than in the other two discs.

Orchestral

PALMGREN: *Tuhkimo—Valse*, and SIBELIUS: *Valse Triste*, played by the BERLIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by HELMUTH THIERFELDER. ARTIPHON 12028 (D10).

GREIG: *Peer Gynt Suite No.* 1, played by the BERLIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA conducted by HELMUTH THIERFELDER. ARTIPHON 12024-7 (2 D10s).

RIMSKY-KORSAKOW (arr. POGORELOFF): *Bojaren Tanz* (from the "Konjek Gorbunk" ballet), and ANDREEFF: *Erinnerungen an Wien,* played by the "POGORELOFF" BOJAREN ENSEMBLE. ANTIPHON 11210 (D10).

The three Berlin Symphony discs are of very modest merit, but their lack of unpretentiousness and flourish atones satisfactorily for the orchestra's smallness and lack of animation. Thierfeld is evidently a competent minor conductor. His tempos tend to be over-slow; his accents have little incisiveness, but his readings are restrained and in good taste. The Finnish coupling is the most interesting disc of the three, not so much for the *Valse Triste* which has been done better on records before, as for the ballad-like waltz from Palmgren's *märchenspiel* "Tuhkimo". (The name of the fairy-play is given as "Takkino" in Pratt's dictionary.) It is a relief to hear something besides Palmgren's paino pieces, and while the waltz is also pretty light in content, it is gracefully written and has characteristic Finnish (that is to say, Sibelian) flavor.

The Pogoreloff balalaika orchestra is one of the best of its kind I have heard on records and the material chosen here is decidedly attractive. The playing is beautifully clean-cut and musically phrased. I like particularly the catchy treatment of the dynamic contrasts and the accelerandos and ritards; added to a charming melodiousness they make Andreeff's waltz one of the most irresistible and atmospheric I know. The Rimsky Boyar dance is extremely light, hardly characteristic of its composer, but a pleasant little tune. *Erinnerungen an Wien* is the prime attraction; I defy anyone to hear it without lively delight.

Organ; 'Cello; Violin

BACH: *Organ Toccata in C,* played by FRANZ SAUER, and TARTINI: *'Cello Concerto in D—Grave,* played by WOLFGANG GRUNSKY accompanied by FRANZ SAUER. CHRISTCHALL 93 (D12).

BACH: *Organ Fantasie in G minor,* and LISZT: *Fantasie and Fugue on B-A-C-H,* played by FRANZ SAUER (organ). CHRISTCHALL 94 (D12).

HALVORSEN: *Chant de Veslemöy;* and COUNTRY DANCES—*Hallig* and *Henstwalzer,* played by JIM JOHANNESSEN (violin), with piano accompaniment in the Halvorsen piece by BIRGER HAMMER. ARTIPHON 11289 (D10).

The two organ discs are of special interest in that they are recorded in the historic Salzburg Cathedral and played by the present cathedral organist, Professor Franz Sauer. The recording is vigorous, with a tendency to over-amplification, but it is effective and retains a realistic touch of hall resonance. The playing is straightforward, but rhythmically somewhat cloudy. We have had other versions of the Bach and Liszt works, but these are worthy duplications. Casals has made a recording of the Tartini movement with piano accompaniment, but Grunsky's is an excellent one, and the recording here is extremely effective, giving the eloquent 'cello tone a high degree of realism without distortion.

Jim Johannessen's fiddle disc is well off the beaten track of repertory violinistics. The sturdy peasant dances, fiddled in lively fashion without accompaniment, contrast admirably with Halvorsen's tender song without words.

Cembalo Trios

BUXTEHUDE: *Sonata in D major,* and KRIEGER: *Sonata in D minor,* played by the BERLIN CEMBALO TRIO—E. L. van Knorr (violin), Paul Hermann ('cello), and Walter Drwenski (cembalo). ARTIPHON 11741-6 (3 D10s).

A piquant novelty in chamber music recording, to say nothing of the historical importance of recorded representation of two almost forgotten seventeenth century composers. Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) was the great forerunner of Bach; it was his concert series in Lübeck that led young Bach to make his weary pilgrimmages on foot. The only recorded work we have had before is the Brunswick-Polydor recording of an organ prelude and fugue played by Alfred Sittard. Johann Philip Krieger (1649-1725) was a noted Bavarian organist, at one time court organist at Bayreuth. This is the first work of his set on discs. Both sonatas have an Air with Variations movement; the plan of placing them on reverse sides of the same disc is not bad, but it leads to a very confusing arrangement of the complete sonatas. The first disc (11741-2) contains the first (Allegro) and third (Largo-Vivace) movements of the Buxtehude sonata. No. 11743-4 contains the first (Andante-Largo) and second (Presto-Largo) movements. No. 11745-6 comprises the two variation movements, the second of Buxtehude's sonata and the third of Krieger's. Buxtehude's piece sounds quite Bachian, although the brief Largo that opens the Allegro is distinctly Handelian. The material is very simple and there is little development; I like best the finale with its gracious Largo and light-hearted vivace. Krieger's work (rather to my surprise, for I scarcely expected him to compare with the better-known Buxtehude) possesses considerably more marked character, with well contrasted qualities of tenderness and energetic exuberance. The air is more broadly songful than Buxtehude's, but again the variations are largely ornamental.

Villa-Lobos

VILLA-LOBOS: *Xango* and *Norzani-na,* ARTIPHON 11590; *Redondilha,* and DEEBUSSY: *Romance,* ARTIPHON 11310; DE FALLA: *Seguidilla Murciana,* and GRANADOS: *El majo Olvidado,* ARTIPHON 11588 (3 D10s). All sung by F'LIPE ROMITO, with orchestral accompaniments.

These discs are of prime significance, first for their convincing exposition of the work Villa-Lobos, the Brazilian composer, is doing with his country's folk material, and secondly for their introduction of a recording baritone of the first class. *Xango* and *Norzani-na* are native Brazilian-Indian chants, I take it, and Romito sings and shouts their savagely brilliant setting with truly primitive fire. An astounding little disc, animated by a profounder power and early life than most large orchestral works that attempt a kolossal schrecklichkeit. The other songs are more familiar, but Romito gives vigorous performance to even the lugubrious *El majo Olvidado.* R. D. D.

THE PHONOPHILE'S BOOKSHELF

A Spanish Phonographic Survey

EL GRAMOPHONE MODERNO. By José Arias Gómez. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A. 163 pp. Price: 3 pesetas (in Spain—foreign price not stated).

We have just received from Sr. Jose Arias Gomez, the dean of P. M. R. subscribers in Spain, a copy of the first edition of his little phonographic encyclopedia—the first of its kind, we believe, to appear in the Spanish language. *El Gramófono Moderno* compares somewhat in format and content with that excellent survey in French, Le Phonographe, by Coeuroy and Clarence. We regret that our ignorance of Spanish prevents us from an appreciation of Sr. Gomez' style, but even to a novice in the language it is apparent that he writes spiritedly and to the point, and that his book is surcharged with the enthusiasm that comes from a full realization of the cultural potentialities of the phonograph.

The four main sections of the book are devoted respectively to phonographic apparatus and accessories, records, phonographic literature, and a phonographic miscellany—devoted to such varied subjects as the advancements in electrical recording, methods of recording, flexible and celluloid discs, and various cultural aspects of the phonograph. The section dealing with records is the largest in the book and covers the recorded musical repertory remarkably comprehensively in a surprisingly limited space. Sr. Gomez is obviously right up-to-date on everything recorded; his lists of records (conveniently classified by both category and composer), and his technical notes go far beyond those in any other similar phonographic survey.

We recommend *El Gramófono Moderno,* to anyone reading Spanish, as a extremely valuable phonographic handbook. For phonophiles in Spain and Spanish-America it should fill a longfelt want for an authoritative survey published in their language.

Musique Adresses Universal

MUSIQUE ADRESSES UNIVERSEL. The Universal Music Trade Directory. 13th Edition. Paris: L'Office Général de la Musique, 15, rue de Madrid. 2790 pp. Price, $4.00.

In acknowledging the receipt of the 1931 edition of this most extensive of all musical directories there is little one can say that has not already been said in reviewing the editions of previous years. The immensity of the book is a little staggering. It contains over 60,000 names and addresses of persons and organizations engaged in the various branches of the music trades—publishers, instrument makers, radio and phonograph manufacturers, etc., etc. Five languages—French, English, German, Italian, and Spanish—and used throughout so that the book is adapted for use almost anywhere in the world.

The first section—some 1600 green pages—is devoted to a topographical index and a list of firms classified by countries and cities. Section 2 is divided into 30 sub-sections classified according to special branches: pianos, organs, stringed instruments, publications, records, etc., etc., with the firm in each subsection listed under their various countries. Section 3 is an alphabetical directory of firm and trade names giving the city in which they are located, so that they may be conveniently looked up in the first section for further details.

As we have commented before, it would be virtually impossible to surpass this encyclopedia on the score of either completeness or convenience. It is a monument of detailed research, offering in handy form a wealth of information that would be impossible to obtain elsewhere. The 1931 edition brings this mass of information strictly up-to-date.

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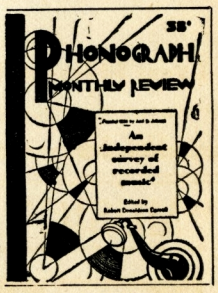

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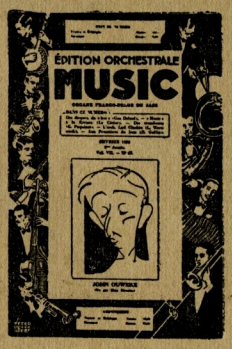

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